

## **“Defending False Accusations,” Part 2 - 2 Corinthians 10:7-12 – January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2017**

- Today's teaching will be part two of a new series we began last week titled, “Defending False Accusations.”
- What we're about to see in the text before us today, is the Apostle Paul showing us by way of example how we are to respond.
- Specifically, when antagonists who falsely accuse us also attack us, which some in the Corinthian church were doing to Paul.

### **1. Be humble and bold (Verses 1-2)**

- Paul appeals to them by Christ's humility and gentleness saying that he doesn't want to be bold toward those who accused him.

### **2. Fight with spiritual weapons (Verses 3-6)**

- Paul says our weapons are not carnal but spiritual with divine power to demolish strongholds by taking every thought captive.

### **3. Build up instead of tearing down (Verses 7-10)**

7 You are judging by appearances. If anyone is confident that they belong to Christ, they should consider again that we belong to Christ just as much as they do. 8 So even if I boast somewhat freely about the authority the Lord gave us for building you up rather than tearing you down, I will not be ashamed of it. 9 I do not want to seem to be trying to frighten you with my letters. 10 For some say, “His letters are weighty and forceful, but in person he is unimpressive and his speaking amounts to nothing.”

- v7 Paul says they're judging by appearances and if anyone is confident they belong to Christ, they should know he does as well.
- v8 He says even if he boasts about the authority God gave him for building up instead of tearing down, he won't be ashamed.
- v9-10 He says he doesn't want to frighten with letters some say are forceful but his presence is weak and speech contemptible.

- What Paul is saying here is the Corinthian Christians viewed everyone carnally based primarily on their outward appearance.
- It seems that not only were they attacking Paul's Christianity spiritually, they were also attacking Paul's appearance physically.
- Sadly, this is textbook when it comes to the attacks from antagonists in the sense that they will tear down to build them self up.

I suppose it shouldn't come as any surprise that the Corinthian Christians would resort to attacking Paul's outward appearance given that ancient writings provide us with a description of what Paul's outward appearance was like. -- He was a man rather small in size, bald-headed, bow-legged, with meeting eyebrows, a large, red and somewhat hooked nose.

- The problem is that the Corinthian Christians were placing a carnal emphasis on ones outward appearance and not their heart.
- Paul is taking the higher road and instead of lowering himself to their level by also tearing them down he tries to build them up.
- In other words, instead of criticizing how they look or how they talk, he remains confident in his authority not wanting to boast.

One commentator said it best this way -- It seems that Paul is uncomfortable writing about his own authority. This is because he is a humble, godly man. He uses boast here in an exaggerated, almost sarcastic sense to show he would prefer not to talk about his own authority; it feels like “boasting” to him. ...Paul recognizes that Jesus grants authority in the church for one reason. He does it to build the body of believers up, not to tear it down.

### **4. Don't compare yourself with others (Verses 11-12)**

11 Such people should realize that what we are in our letters when we are absent, we will be in our actions when we are present. 12 We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise.

- v11 Paul says such people should realize that he's in his letters when absent, and will be in his actions when he is present also.
- v12 He says he won't dare compare himself with some who commend them self, as comparing oneself with oneself is not wise.
- This is interesting for a number of reasons chief of which is that of the gauge by which the Corinthians measured themselves.

- It seems they were not only measuring themselves by themselves, they were also comparing themselves among themselves.
- As such, they were commending themselves using themselves as the measure so as to shed themselves in a favorable light.
- The problem with this is it leads to becoming puffed up with pride, which results in putting down and looking down on others.

Adam Clarke of this wrote, “They are also full of pride and self-conceit; they look within themselves for accomplishments which their self-love will soon find out; for to it real and fictitious are the same.”

- The truth of the matter is, comparing ourselves with others can be a double-edged sword in the sense that it can go both ways.
- This because, I can either fancy myself superior to the one I'm comparing myself with, or I can also feel like I'm a failure as well.
- Personally, I would be grossly remiss if I didn't confess that as a pastor, comparing myself could become a terrible temptation.

I like how one pastor said it, “This needs to be communicated to pastors and church leaders today: Stop measuring yourself by yourselves. Stop comparing yourselves among yourselves. We should not make ourselves the measure of others, feeling we are superior to them if, by outward appearance, we are more successful. On the other side, we should not make others our measure, feeling we are failures if—by outward appearance—they are more successful.”

- Here's the bottom line in closing, rather than comparing our self with others we're to look at our self in the mirror of God's Word.
- When I do I'll see myself as God sees me, which is as a sinner who has fallen short of God's perfect standard of righteousness.
- Then when I look at others, I am more likely to not think more highly of myself than I ought, and esteem them better than myself.

Phil 2:3 Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.